CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by
THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Sigtuna, Sweden

Director: Dr. HARRY JOHANSSON, Sigtuna, Sweden
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No. 25 February 28th, 1957.

The Independent Missionary Societies in the Northern Countries to Be Preserved.

The Secretary of the Joint Committee of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, Rev. Norman Goodall, has been visiting in the Northern countries during last month in order to discuss the attitude of the missionary councils in these countries to a possible future integration of the two international organizations. As previously mentioned, there is a certain opposition to such plans, especially in Norway (see CN No. 19), but so far there is no official decision regarding this matter. Rev. Goodall's conversations with the leaders of the missionary societies in the Northern countries were therefore also only for mutual information.

In interviews in various Northern newspapers, Rev. Goodall expressed the opinion that some form for integration between the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council must be the natural consequence of the increasing identification of the spheres of work of the two organizations; but he strongly emphasized at the same time that this does not mean that the independent missionary societies in the respective countries should be dissolved so as to be absorbed by the Churches. Especially in countries with the system of a National Church the missionary societies play an important part, and must do so, it was stated by Rev. Goodall in an interview in the Norwegian Christian daily "Vårt land".

Plans for Joint Northern Radio Church Service Transmissions.

It has been proposed by Norwegian quarters that there should be joint transmissions of church services in the Northern countries and the proposal, which has caused interest both in Sweden and Denmark, is being discussed by the radio corporations in the two countries at the moment. The thought is, once a year, to transmit a joint Northern church service, possibly in connection with the "Nordic Day", falling in the autumn; but besides this it should also be only part of further efforts at awakening increased mutual interest in the radio for the religious life in the Northern countries.

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In interviews in various Northern newspapers Rev. Goodall expressed the opinion that some form for integration between the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council must be the natural consequence of the increasing identification of the two spheres of work of the two organizations, but the difficulty appears at the present time only to be that one does not yet know exactly how this is to be effected by the Churches. Especially in connection with the system of "Auxiliary Groups" through the missionary societies should be properly maintained, and Rev. Goodall is also reported by Rev. Goodall in an interview in the Norwegian Christian daily "Vart Land".

Plans for Joint Northern Broadcasting Transmissions.

It has been proposed by Norwegian quarters that there should be joint transmissions of church services in the Northern countries on the occasion of "United Nations Day", which has caused "concern" both in Swedish and Norwegian broadcasting circles. Nothing definite has been decided by the radio corporations in the two countries at the moment. The thought is, however, to transmit a joint Northern church service, especially in connection with the "United Nations Day", falling on a Sunday, but believe this it should only be a one-time event of limited effect at awakening increased interest in the radio for religious life in the Northern countries.

In Denmark the suggestion has been greeted with wholehearted approval by "Kristeligt Dagblad" in a leading article. The paper feels that people in general know far too little about what is going on in cultural and religious quarters in the neighbouring Northern countries and continues, "When we speak about the Northern countries being bound together with strong ties, we probably think, first and foremost, of the purely cultural fellowship uniting them. We wonder whether the strongest ties between the Northern peoples are not Christianity and Church? Here we find a fellowship, uniting individuals more strongly than anything else. Here is a field within Northern co-operation which, more than anything else, may result in and lead to a fellowship cutting across all political divergencies and irrespective of all economic considerations."

Northern Conference for Women Divinity Scholars.

25 women theological scholars from the Northern countries were assembled last month for a conference at Sparreholm in Sweden in order to discuss common problems.

At the meeting it was stated that there are 256 women candidates of theology in Finland, of whom 20% are employed as parish workers, mainly in Helsinki (Helsingfors). In Sweden there are 160, of whom only a few are directly engaged in parish work, and in Norway there are some 35, of whom one is employed for ecclesiastical service at the hospital in Ullevål in Oslo with permission to baptize and administrate the Eucharist without being actually ordained, while two others are employed as parish workers.

Only in Denmark, where there are 25 women candidates of divinity, there are 4 women church ministers. In Sweden and Finland there is no legislation permitting women to take holy orders, and in Norway, where such an Act has now been passed, no woman has yet applied for office in the Church.

At the conference there was no wish to force matters in places where women are not already admitted to holy orders. There was no desire to have the matter treated on a par with other questions of the emancipation of women. On the other hand, a number of fields of work were pointed out where women candidates of theology might be engaged to a much larger extent than is the case at present, as for instance in hospital work, social work and teaching.

DENMARK

The Patriarch of Moscow Answers the Bishop of Copenhagen.

A reply has been received in a letter addressed to Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, Copenhagen, to the appeal by the Bishops Erik Jensen and Fuglsang-Damgaard to the Patriarch Alexis "in the name of Christ to make his influence felt in order to safeguard the freedom of the Hungarian people and bring about a just peace" (see CN No. 23). It says in the letter,

"Together with you we feel deeply for the Hungarian people who have had to endure unspeakable sufferings on account of the fatal developments of events ..... We have not ceased to pray to the most gracious Lord to show His mercy upon the suffering Hungarian nation. Praise be to the Lord! Peace is ruling once more on Hungarian soil and its people have taken up productive work."

After having mentioned the financial aid by the Russian Orthodox Church towards relief and rehabilitation work in Hungary, the Patriarch goes on,

"We are convinced that you agree with us in these endeavours. May the same thoughts and peace be among us and may the God of Charity and Peace be with us all!"

The Patriarch's letter has caused a certain amount of attention in Denmark as it seems to show that the leaders of the Russian Church apparently have not at all grasped the fact that the revolt in Hungary sprang from an almost unanimous desire in the nation for freedom and independence, but that they share the official Soviet-Russian and communistic points of view.

"Youth for Christ" - Campaign in Copenhagen.

During the last week of February a large-scale revivalist campaign for young people will take place in the concert hall of Tivoli in Copenhagen. The Danish branch of the international and inter-denominational movement, "Youth for Christ", is responsible for the arrangement and the principal speaker will be the leader of the work in Europe, Dewis Clark. The Scotch evangelist, Campell McAlpine, will also give addresses. Singing and music will play an important part at the meetings; a young people's choir will sing together with several soloists, among them the South African "silver tenor" George Mowat. Every evening there will be a "Bible-quiz".

The planning for the campaign has been going on for a long time, both as regards praying for it and in the training of assistants.

Some time ago the Danish committee for "Youth for Christ" applied to the "Evangelical Alliance" for recognition as the youth section of the Alliance. "Evangelical Alliance" was in favour of this application, provided the Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A. organizations in Denmark, which in this country belong to the Lutheran National Church, would approve of it. During the ensuing debate it turned out that the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. could not go in for the thought, and the "Youth for Christ" movement is therefore still an independent movement, supported mainly by Free Church circles.

"The Sanctity and Catholicity of the Church as Ecumenical Motives".

The "Week of Prayer" for the unity of the Church was marked in Denmark by, among other things, an ecumenical gala evening in Copenhagen, arranged by the Ecumenical Council in Denmark. The principal speaker of the evening was Professor Regin Prenter, Århus, whose subject was "The Sanctity and Catholocity of the Church as Ecumenical Motives".

The catholicity of the Church admonishes us, with courage and boldness, to get together, while the sanctity of the Church reminds us that this is only possible on the foundation of truth, Professor Prenter explained, while at the same time warning against trying to create a unity in organization before a complete understanding in regard to doctrines has been achieved.

That the Church is holy means that it is bound to God, that it is catholic means that it is bound to the World.

The sanctity of the Church is apparent in a drawing near to God which must be the characteristic of any Church. It is a movement away from the World. The catholicity of the Church is apparent in a movement in the opposite direction - the endeavours to reach out to the most distant boundaries with the Message. In this light we discover two well-known types of Christianity: the revivalist type and the cultural type. The one draws towards God, the other draws those who have found God towards the World.

After having spoken about how the two currents, which ought to move side by side within the Church, had led to disruption, Professor Prenter raised the question of what the confession of believing in the "holy catholic Church" meant to the ecumenical work. He answered,

"The confession of the catholicity of the Church draws us towards one another. We cannot have foreign missions without getting together. A disunited Christendom is not able to win the world. But if we let ourselves be bound by the conception of the sanctity of the Church, then we cannot unite at any price. We cannot, and shall not, seek unity and fellowship for their own sakes. We must be willing to wait for one another, even though the journey is slow. Because only on the basis of truth can we go forward together."

Rev. Svend Borregaard also spoke at the meeting and told about his impressions from the Danish Church delegation's trip to Rumania and Bulgaria, and Rev. Erik Kyst from the Methodist Church told about the Kirchentag in Frankfurt. The evening closed with prayer for the unity of the Church.

Religious Radio Station to Be Set Up on the Island of Bornholm.

A representative of the American Radio Missionary Society which is responsible for the famous sender "The Voice of Andes", Mr. Brookhooven, visited Denmark recently in order to discuss the possibility of establishing an European religious broadcasting station on the Danish island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea.

Mr. Brookhooven said that the suggestion had been received with great sympathy by bishops and other ecclesiastical leaders in Germany, Holland, Belgium and the Northern countries. The plan is to build a very powerful sender which may be heard on medium and long waves and, as it is of importance that the broadcasts should be heard in the German East Zone, it has been suggested to place the sender on Bornholm, lying close to the East German coastline. The plans are far from being clearly outlined as yet and, for instance, it has not yet been decided in how many languages the programmes should be broadcast or for how many hours the station should be open.

A Roman-Catholic and a Protestant to Visit Spain and Portugal Together.

An ecumenical undertaking of a very special nature will take place in the autumn when a Roman-Catholic priest from the Vatican and a Lutheran clergyman from Denmark will travel together to Spain and Portugal.

The Danish Roman-Catholic priest, Peter Schindler, who for a number of years has been occupied by scientific studies and other literary activities, has been invited by the publishing firm of the Lutheran youth movements in Denmark "De Unges Forlag" to continue his popular series of traveling guide books from Italy and Austria with one about Spain and Portugal. On a four week's trip in the autumn to these countries to collect material for the book, he will be accompanied by his friend, Rev. Chr. Bartholdy, who is the President of the Lutheran pietistic movement "Indre Mission i Danmark" (Home Mission in Denmark).

Since the two ecclesiastics met in 1951 they have wasted no opportunity of being together, and it will be interesting to see the result of their joint trip to Spain where it may certainly not be said that Roman-Catholic and Evangelical Churches are on friendly terms with one another.

Memorial Church for Kaj Munk With Both Altar and Stage?

The great Danish dramatist, Rev. Kaj Munk, who was murdered by the Gestapo during the War, will probably be commemorated by the erection of a church in the near future, and the plan is that the church, besides an altar and a pulpit, should also contain a stage so that church plays and other plays suitable for performances in a church may get the proper setting.

The church is to be built in the parish of Vigerslev in Copenhagen, one of the rapidly growing parishes on the outskirts of the city, and it is the rector of this parish, Rev. Harald Sandbæk, who is the originator of the plan. Rev. Sandbæk is well known in ecumenical quarters for his contribution towards the relief work of the World Council of Churches after the War.

The plan has met with a very mixed reception. Thus, "Kristeligt Dagblad" very strongly advises against it on the grounds that it will mean a radical break with all Church tradition until this moment. In one way the paper is glad that the churches in many places have been used for church plays during recent years, but it is emphasized that the church should be a consecrated place, dedicated to the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, and a possible use of the church for religious plays and such like must be subordinated to this and not on an equal level with it. The conservative paper "Berlingske Aftenavis", however, feels that there is no question of any breach of tradition. "From ancient times the service has been so dramatically influenced that altar and stage overlap," the paper states, "and no one has been better able than Kaj Munk to turn a stage into an altar and a pulpit..... One should not in advance turn down the attempt at giving the Church the opportunity once more of influencing cultural life through adopting a leading position and by inviting others than those usually to be found at the services."

Position of the Methodist Churches in the Northern Countries.

As mentioned in CN No. 23 there is a rather strong feeling in the Methodist Church in Denmark in favour of withdrawing from membership in the Free Church Council, so that co-operation with the other Free Churches would be directed through the Ecumenical Council in which the Lutheran National Church is also represented. The reason for this feeling is that none of the other members of the Free Church Council are adherents of infant baptism on principle. Certain quarters in the Methodist Church even want an organizational connection with the National Church. Having this in mind, the paper "Kristeligt Dagblad" in Copenhagen, has asked the Bishop for the Northern Methodist Churches, Odd Hagen, several questions, and part of the interview is given below.

-"Is the Methodist Church not more closely related to the Lutheran National Church in matters of doctrine than it is, for instance, to the Baptist Church?"

- "Yes, from a doctrinal point of view we are, of course, closer to other denominations with infant baptism than to those practising adult baptism; but from an ecclesiastical point of view we are more akin to the Baptist Church."

- "What do you mean by "ecclesiastical" in this connection?"

- "I am thinking of the manner in which the Churches are organized. Here we, as a Free Church, have another view of the State than the National Church, but the same as that of the Baptist Church."

- "What stands between Methodism and the Lutheran National Church?"

- "That's a sweeping question to have to answer in a few words. Perhaps I may say that we have another view of the Church and another view of the sacraments."

- "Also of the sacraments?"

- "Yes, we do not believe in rebirth through Baptism."

- "In the message from the Methodist bishops to the General Conference of the Methodist Churches in Baltimore in 1948 it was said that Baptism is a sign of rebirth or the new birth."

- "Yes, a sign, but no more. We do not believe that a rebirth takes place in and through Baptism and therefore we do not believe, either, that a child perishes if it dies before it has been baptized, and this is probably the consequence of the teaching of the Lutheran National Church regarding Baptism."

- "Are you a fanatical adherent of the Free Churches?"

- "I can well see the advantages of a National Church as, for instance, the great independence of the ministers. But it is of decisive importance to me that the Free Churches, contrary to the Lutheran National Church, are dogmatically founded on the New Testament. We cannot abandon our Free Church views. The first social and spiritual unit meeting us in the Bible is that of the family. There are no geographically determined spiritual units."

FINLAND

Visiting Service Being Prepared in Finland.

For some time a number of Finnish congregations have been training laymen for a visiting service. As in other countries, the reason for this is the need for personal contact between the Church and the individuals, a need which cannot, in the great parishes, be satisfied through the efforts of the ministers and the salaried church staff alone, but must call for the active contribution of laymen.

At a ministers' meeting in Tampere (Tammerfors) in the autumn of 1955, a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Rev. Kusti Korhonen, consisting of a representative from each of the Cathedral Chapters, with the purpose of studying similar efforts in other countries and of preparing the work in Finland. Since last autumn, courses for "visitors" have been arranged in 7 parishes of the diocese of Tampere (Tammerfors), and also elsewhere steps have been taken for beginning this kind of work, among other places, in Helsinki (Helsingfors). It is possible that a visiting service will be started in the Capital in the autumn.

Sharp Criticism of the New Film About the Church in Finland.

The production of a documentary film telling about the Church in Finland, which was announced some time ago, has now been completed. The film has been produced on the initiative of church-men, but in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is a colour and sound film, playing for 15-20 minutes, and the plan is, with the assistance of the Finnish legations, to distribute and show it in other countries.

The Finland-Swedish weekly "Församlingsbladet" commenting on the film, says that the pictures of the medieval churches and the Finnish scenery are outstandingly beautiful, but at the same time it is criticized that the audience, in watching the film, must get the impression that Finnish church life of to-day is also still at a medieval stage. The film shows a beautifully dressed Lappish couple on its way to church and a "church boat" filled with men and women in national costumes as was the custom ages ago. There is, admittedly, an up-to-date service of promotion in Helsinki (Helsingfors) in the film, the paper writes, but otherwise there are no pictures of any urban districts, not to say of one single factory chimney in the whole film.

Church Rally for "Labour and Altar".

The Church Rally celebrated last month in Lahti was concentrated around two main features in human life, "Labour and Altar". The Rally was opened by Bishop Martti Simojoki, and the meetings were led by Dean Oskar Paarma. A number of clergymen and laymen spoke on the same subjects, centred around the question of how the Gospel may be delivered to modern man who, in the midst of the hurry of the day and in spite of his self-sufficiency and quarrelsomeness is groping for an answer to many problems. One tried in unison to find out what could be done in order to prevent human values from being

destroyed in a world where the tasks of labour are becoming increasingly severe and spiritually destructive. The leit-motiv through all the addresses was the fact that the propitiation of Christ is valid in all spheres of life, also where money, political power, and

Bishop Gunnar Hultgren, Härnösand, and Rev. Martin Tveter were present as representatives of the Swedish and Norwegian Churches, respectively.

"College Week" in Helsinki (Helsingfors).

For the first time a so-called "College Week" has been held in Helsinki (Helsingfors) with the purpose of establishing closer contact between the Church and the institutions for higher education in the capital. The "Week" took place from February 10th - 17th and was arranged by the Finnish Student Christian Association, the congregations in Helsinki, and the educational institutions jointly. Preparations for the "Week" have taken place throughout all of last year and endeavours have been made to take advantage of the experiences gathered in other countries through similar projects. At the opening meeting the Archbishop Ilmari Salomies, the Rector of the University, Professor Edvin Linkomies, and the President of the Student Christian Association, Professor P. Kaitera, spoke. The principal speaker in the series of addresses was Professor Osmo Tiililä, and at the special service in connection with the "Week" Bishop Martti Simojoki preached.

The Church Play May Give Life to Liturgy.

A lecture on church plays and their importance has caused a certain amount of attention in Finland. It was delivered some time ago at the University of Helsinki (Helsingfors) by the Director of the Sigtuna Foundation, Rev. Olav Hartman, who is well known both as a preacher and an author also outside his home country of Sweden. The main theme of the lecture was that the church play should constitute a link between altar and congregation, be a part of the liturgy. It is not a new form for religious "advertizing". In liturgy there is a hidden drama and many people have, for the first time, only really experienced the value of liturgy through watching a church play - the play perhaps even leading one or two to the very Communion Table.

The church play wants to be a form for preaching, the Director said, which will establish once more the lost contact between the great mystery at the altar and the congregation. In the medieval church plays the actors as well as the chorus, i.e. the congregation, faced the altar and the play was enacted immediately in front of the altar. For various reasons the church plays were later on removed from the churches and thus the contact was broken.

In our days attempts are made at reviving the church plays in a new form - and here Olav Hartman himself takes a leading part - but with the old function of bringing the liturgy to life.

News in Brief.

- The Lutheran Church in Hungary has invited the Finnish Dean Paavo Viljanen to visit Hungary. The invitation was signed by the Bishops Ordass and Turoczy. The time of the visit is still uncertain; it depends largely on the question when a Hungarian visa may be obtained.

- The Swedish congregations in Helsinki (Helsingfors) have issued invitations to a series of lectures for young parents. In the course of this year 7 lectures will be given, followed by discussions on pedagogical, ethical and religious questions in relation to marriage and child education.

NORWAY

The Free Churches Doubtful About Support From the State.

The new cultural programme published by the Cultural Committee of the Norwegian Social Democratic Party (see CH No. 23), among other things, goes in for the proposal that the Free Churches, in the name of religious freedom, ought to receive the same public support as the Lutheran National Church, proportionate to the number of members. It appears, however, from a statement by the Chairman of the Norwegian Free Church Council, Dr Alf Lier, that the Free Churches are doubtful about accepting such grants. Dr. Lier says, among other things,

"I want to make it quite clear that we have never asked for public grants in support of our work ..... Another matter is that already several years ago we have drawn attention to the fact that the deduction for church subscriptions allowed for Free Church members in calculating the taxes is far too small. As is well known, we pay our ministers, organists, church wardens, and the erection and maintainance of church buildings ourselves without the aid of any kind from outside ..... But considering this fact, the deduction allowed is ridiculously small."

To the question whether it would not change the attitude of the Free Churches towards public grants if they were simply offered them by the authorities, Dr. Lier answers,

"It all depends on circumstances. If, for instance, the offer were accompanied by the stipulation that the State should be represented in our executive committees - a stipulation usually connected with government grants to private institutions - then the offer should be turned down without any hesitation, as far as I can see ..... The Free Churches consider it of vital importance to be free, i.e. independent of the State. - It might be another matter in regard to our social institutions."

Norwegian Religious Broadcasts From Tangier.

Around New Year's a series of Christian broadcasts in Norwegian were begun over a broadcasting station in Tangier under the name of "NOREA-Radio". The name is short for "Nordic Radio Evangelistic

Association" and the broadcasts are sponsored by the "Norsk Lutherske Missionssamband" (Norwegian Lutheran Mission). At the moment there is only one half-hour programme every evening in the 31 metre band, but the plan is to extend this considerably if the trial broadcasts prove successful.

In his opening speech the first evening, the Secretary General of the "Missionssambandet", Tormod Vågen, said, "We have only one aim: to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as comprehensively as possible through addresses, Bible lectures, singing and music. Foreign Mission will also get its fixed place in the programmes." The Secretary General said that it is hoped to obtain a regular co-operation with other Christian groups in Norway with the same confessional outlook.

The programmes are recorded on wire tape in Norway and sent to Tangier. The reason for transmitting the programmes from such a distant place as Tangier is that all broadcasting and transmitting of programmes in Norway is the monopoly of the Norwegian National Broadcasting Corporation. So far the transmissions from Tangier have been clearly received.

Sharp Attack on the Ecumenical Movement.

At the joint conference of the voluntary church organizations in Geilo last month the National Secretary, Arthur With, in an address very sharply criticized the ecumenical movement. He refutes the assertion that the World Council of Churches is only a neutral meeting ground for the Churches by referring to a statement by Bishop Leslie Newbigin in his last book, in which he emphasizes that the World Council of Churches has the character of being a Church and executes the functions of a Church: foreign mission work, evangelization and incorporation in the Body of Christ.

The National Secretary said that it was a fundamental thesis of the ecumenical movement that, faced with secularization, ethical disintegration, and heathen ideologies, Christians of every denomination must unite under one banner - then the cause of the Gospel would conquer and the Kingdom of God be established. This he characterized as being wishful thinking with no foundation in the Word of God and operating with false ideas of unity and a non-Biblical conception of the Church.

Another tendency characteristic of the ecumenical movement was, according to the speaker, the shifting of authority from the Bible to the Church. This new kind of theology has spiritualized the Word of the Bible, and endeavours are now made to build a Church which may lend authority to the Word, he said.

Growing Interest for Christian Pedagogy.

In its annual report the Norwegian "Institutt for Kristen Oppseding" (Institute for Christian Education) which recently held its annual meeting in Oslo, tells about a growing interest in wide circles for Christian pedagogy. During the past year the Institute has been able to give extensive assistance both as re-

gards text books, practice books, and aids in teaching; a number of courses for instructors in religion in the schools have been arranged all over the country, and several hundred lectures for parents on educational problems in the light of Christian teaching have been delivered. Finally, a large scale advisory service has also been given.

SWEDEN

National Church to Include Free Churches as Special Sections of the Church?

"As a vision of the future I imagine a National Church which includes the Free Churches and accepted these as special sections within the Church. As a rule there are no longer such very great divergencies of theology between the Lutheran National Church and the Free Churches, often no greater than those already existing in the Church."

These closing words in an interview with the former Bishop Arvid Runestam of the diocese of Karlstad in the "Morgonbladet" immediately before his resignation have aroused considerable attention and opposition, not the least in Free Church quarters in Sweden. Thus, the President of the Ecumenical Association, the former Bishop of Stockholm, Manfred Björkquist, states that it is of little value to discuss the future of the Swedish Ecumenical Movement, rather should one work for extending the practical co-operation already existing and enlarge it by conversations among the leaders of the various denominations about fundamental questions of faith. The Methodist minister in Göteborg, Thorvald Källstad, describes the vision of Bishop Runestam as "an un-ecumenical vision in the century of ecumenicity" and emphasizes that the individual denominations should continue to be independent, although in co-operation with the Lutheran National Church. Others, however, take a more positive view of Bishop Runestam's words, although they admit that a possible organizational unity of the various denominations will be possible only in a very distant future and will presuppose great changes.

Moreover, in the interview the Bishop expressed his anxiety that the Swedish State should become more and more removed from Christian influence in the case Church and State were seperated. The State would then, he feared, develop a kind of religious-ethical substance of its own, perhaps on the basis of the ideology of the welfare state.

According to the Bishop, a marked support of the Church was evident during recent years, first and foremost through a positively inclined attitude towards the Church which, for instance, were expressed in a statement like this, "We cannot do without a Church; it is our only authority in spiritual and ethical matters."

The Revivalist Campaign Sets Its Mark on Stockholm.

For more than a month the great revivalist campaign, supported by all denominations except the Roman-Catholic and the Pentecost Mission, has set its mark on the city.

Already on the first evening when the Bishop of Stockholm, Dr. Helge Ljungberg, was among the speakers there were some 4000 persons present so that they could not all be accomodated in the Blasieholm's Church, one of the centres of the campaign, and almost every day thousands of people have been approached. Besides the big meetings in the Blasieholm's Church five evenings a week, where a choir of 300 and the AKO-team took part in the services, there were "question evenings" every Monday, meetings for young people every Sunday, and a series of meetings especially for women, and others for politicians, business men or other "particular groups". A band of singers gave very successful performances together with selected speakers in various places of entertainment and in hospitals and places of work. Many afternoons there were sacred concerts in a number of churches and, finally, there were specially arranged midnight services and meetings in private homes. Attendance has been good and it seems as if many "new" people have been reached with the Gospel.

The campaign, which closed on February 17th, has most certainly put its stamp on the city during the 5-6 weeks in which it lasted.

Two New Bishops Consecrated.

Two new Bishops, Dr. Ivar Hylander and Dr. Gert Borgenstierna, were recently consecrated for service in the dioceses of Luleå and Karlstad respectively. The consecration took place at a special service in the Cathedral of Uppsala at which the Swedish Royal Couple, the Minister of Church Affairs, several foreign ambassadors, bishops from the other Northern countries, the Bishop of Chester, as well as a number of representatives of Swedish ecclesiastical and civic authorities were present.

Church Services with Running Commentary Transmitted in the Swedish Radio.

The Swedish radio has begun a new form for transmission of church services which may perhaps prove especially suited to make people listen who are unfamiliar with church life. Instead of the usual uninterrupted and direct transmissions of the services, they will be treated almost as football matches or the opening ceremony in Parliament. A speaker adds a running commentary and descriptions during the service which should help the listeners to follow what is going on in the church.

The first attempt in this direction was made in January with a service in the Johannes Kyrka in Stockholm at which the rector, Rev. Erik Arbin, preached, and at the end an interview with the minister was also broadcast. The next transmission of this kind will take place on March 31st when a radio service in Swedish will be transmitted from Finland, namely the morning service in the Cathedral of Borgå at which Bishop G.O. Rosenqvist will preach. Here the reason for a running commentary will be especially obvious as the Finnish order of service to some extent differs from that of the Swedish Church.

Ministers Employed at Hospitals to Join in the Rounds.

In the spiritual care of the patients in Swedish hospitals a new form for co-operation between doctors and clergymen has been tried out. During a trial period of three months the two clergymen employed at the hospital in Luleå take part in the rounds of the doctors once a fortnight, after which there is a staff meeting for all the members of the staff concerned in order to discuss what may be done for the individual patients.

The reason for this attempt is that the minister employed at a hospital in the course of his work often lacks the knowledge necessary concerning the physical and mental conditions of the patient in order to be able to help the invalid in the best possible way. It is felt that it would make his task easier if he were to become part of the hospital environment and take his place in the team of doctors, nurses, and others employed in the care of the sick.

Christian Institute for Training in Politics Desirable.

The Christian cultural periodical "Vår Lösen" suggests the establishment of a church institute for political training at which it would be possible to work out impartial programmes of action regarding specific political problems. This is the theme of a leading article in which the appeal by "Kristet Samhällsansvar" (Christian Responsibility for Society), previous to the last elections to Parliament, to elect professed Christians (see CN Nos. 13, 15 and 17) is being sharply criticized.

"Vår Lösen" puts the question whether such a policy has anything at all to do with Christian politics and continues,

"If political activities demand knowledge and training like all other professions, then a certain philosophy of life cannot, without further ado, become a decisive advantage. All professions, not the least that of being a politician, are related to the Ten Commandments. But just as a person is not necessarily the best craftsman or the best professor, just because he is a professed Christian, in the same way a Christian outlook on life is no guarantee that a person is the best qualified political candidate. On the contrary, it ought to be self-evident that a Christian policy is a good policy, i.e. founded on expert knowledge and sound judgment. If this demand for knowledge is waived in favour of religiously coloured slogans when, for instance, nominating political candidates in an election propaganda, then one actually takes advantage of the ignorance of many people or of their unwillingness to make up their minds regarding the actual task which constitutes the core of politics."

Marked Decrease in the Number of Legally Induced Abortions.

In connection with the debate concerning the legislation dealing with legally induced abortion it is interesting to note that the numbe of legally induced abortions in Sweden is clearly on the decrease. While there were 6.328 legally induced abortions in 1951, the figures for 1954 were 5.089, for 1955: 4.577 and for 1956: 3.856. The last figure, published by the Swedish Medical Board, thus shows a decrease of 39% in the course of five years. There is no information regarding the estimated number of illegally induced abortions.